

OCT 26 1998

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.80897 VOLUME 32 NUMBER 4 PAGES 157-200 OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1998

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With  
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

**President**

David W. Moore

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$23

Sustaining (yearly) \$50

Family (yearly) \$25

Life (one payment) \$500

Subscriptions to *Trail & Landscape*: (libraries and institutions): \$23  
per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$5

Single copies of recent issues: \$6 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid; to Vols. 21-25 \$5 postpaid.

**Membership application, correspondence :**

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After 10 a.m.

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by  
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club  
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

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Volume 32 Number 4  
October – December 1998

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# Welcome, New Members

## Ottawa Area

Dorli Abman & family

Victoria Alexander

Cheryl Black

Wilfred T. Bradnock & family

Richard R. Brouillet & family

Ann Chudleigh

Elizabeth Farquhar Burke

Jamie Flynn

Anke Fritzsche & family

Eleanor Heise

Teri Keogh & family

Anne & Ian Jeffrey

Andrea McCormack

Melissa McDonald

Susanne MacLean

Don McLelland & family

Claudine Page & family

Melissa Pilon

Chelsey Reinburg

Judith Rose

Renate Sander-Regier

Gareth Thomas

Tina Tolgyesy & family

Anthony Theelen

Graham Vesey

Judith Wilks & family

## Other Areas

Robert Pineo, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia



Dave Smythe  
Membership Committee  
August 1998



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# A Message from the President

*Dave Moore*

For the past decade, members of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club have enjoyed a rare and unusual thing. No, I'm not talking about the wonderful monthly meetings, or the excellent field trips and leaders. The thing I refer to is the annual fee structure for membership in the OFNC. Of course, having read that, most of you will realize that what comes next will probably not fall into the category of "good news."

Our Club has attempted, for many years, to avoid raising the fees charged to members. We have tried to match expenses to income and, for a while, we actually increased our member equity. Unfortunately, with new postal regulations and the loss of our postal subsidy we are faced with enormous increases in our mailing costs, not to mention the general inflation which affects every aspect of finances for all of us.

These increases have resulted in a deficit over the past few years, a trend that shows no signs of reversal. In order to bring income back to a level that will cover our expenses, Council directed committees to look at cutting their budgets, and for those that generate income, to look into increasing their revenues. Excursions & Lectures, Publications and Membership were three areas noted.

At the Council meeting of June 9th, 1998, the Council voted to increase member and subscription fees as shown in the table below. The Finance Committee has been instructed to carefully monitor the results of the changes made this year, and, should the results be unsatisfactory, we may have to face another fee increase in a year or two.

**THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB ANNUAL FEES, 1999**  
(Membership includes *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape*.)

Individual membership \$28; Family membership \$30;  
Sustaining membership \$50; Life membership (one payment) \$500;  
Benefactor \$500.

***The Canadian Field-Naturalist***

\$28 for individuals; \$45 for institutions.

***Trail & Landscape***

\$28 for libraries and institutions.

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# FON Notes

*Frank Pope*

The 1998 Annual Conference of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) was held in Guelph, May 29, 30 and 31. An item of local interest was the election of Jane Topping to a two year term as President of the FON. Jane is a conservation activist and long time member of the OFNC. She has served on the Council, most recently as Chair of the Conservation Committee and FON representative. In recent years Jane has devoted her energies to provincial issues, serving on the Board of the FON and playing a significant part in the restructuring of the Board. Jane served as Vice-President of the FON over the past two years.

The opening day was devoted to conservation issues, primarily *Lands for Life*. Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelin gave a short talk and entertained questions. Although new to the portfolio, he was proud of having been able to lead the new Fish and Game Act through third reading in the provincial legislature. Mr. Snobelin said that *Lands for Life* was a learning experience for everyone and he welcomed input from all quarters. Bob Gray, Chair of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Round Table and Bob Michels, Chair of the Boreal West Round Table were also there. At that time they were all still in listening mode so we got no clues about the direction the final report would take. The message that came through clearly at the end of the day, however, was that these are unhappy times for defenders of natural areas.

The FON also reminds us that the new Planning Act confers increased responsibility to municipalities for protecting natural areas. It is in the planning stage that naturalists can be most effective in protecting natural areas. Environmental Advisory Committees (EACs) have been set up by most municipalities. To support naturalists in contributing to these committees, FON has produced a booklet entitled "Protecting Nature Close to Home."

Although not featured as a theme of the conference, the attention given to art and nature struck me as an innovation in this year's program. Folk singer and song writer James Gordon performed with his folk group "Tamarack" on Friday night and then gave a song writing workshop on Saturday. Artist Robert Bateman was the keynote speaker Saturday morning and he gave a workshop on sketching in the afternoon. Local artist Aleta Karstad explained how to sketch and take notes in the field, illustrating her talk with her own meticulous work, and she followed up with a workshop on Sunday.

In August, the annual conference of the Canadian Nature Federation was held jointly with the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists in Sackville, New Brunswick. ▢

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## Monarch Lanterns

*Robert Nero*

Sometime in September  
as I drove west in  
mid-afternoon sunshine  
rattling down a gravel road  
in search of grouse habitat  
I found the roadsides strangely  
marked at intervals with  
glowing sunlit bouquets  
radiant bursting milkweed pods  
releasing silken seed showers  
monarch butterfly food source  
lighting the way, I thought  
for those continental migrants.

Two cold months later  
looking for snowy owls  
down from northern lands  
I walked through snow  
to gather some of those empty pods  
bringing you a winter bouquet  
birdlike hollow husks on erect stalks  
twisted dry silvery-grey cusps  
thrumming in the wind. ▢

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# Conservation Matters

*David Hobden*

As naturalists we know that conservation matters. The mandate of the Conservation Committee is to bring the same message to the rest of our society. Ever since Colonel By decided to dig out Dow's Great Swamp and gave us Dow's Lake instead, the natural inhabitants of our region have been steadily displaced. The combined efforts of canal and dam builders, farmers, lumber barons, and urban developers, among others have radically changed the local environment. Fortunately we still have some areas in a more or less natural state and a number of species find they can even live among us. The Conservation Committee tries to protect the natural areas from further development, using whatever means seem appropriate, and looks for opportunities to promote conservation and nature friendly lifestyles in individuals and the community.

## **Lands for Life**

The Boreal West Round Table issued its preliminary proposals in June and made its promised return visit to Ottawa. A group of Round Table members and staff came to answer questions about the proposals displayed around the room. Their proposals included some new designations for areas that would be protected. At first glance this might appear to meet the Partnership for Public Lands (PPL) objective of protecting fifteen to twenty per cent of the area. Unfortunately the degree of protection offered seems inadequate and some significant areas are missing. The result is that the area with adequate protection falls far short of the Partnership objective. There has been major internal friction within the Round Table – two members went public by independently holding a press conference with the complaint that conservation and tourism were not adequately served by the proposals. It seems the Round Table has not taken any action likely to meet the objections of their two rebel members. The OFNC did not add to its previous submission (this was a brief entitled *Lands for Biodiversity* – see the July-Sept. issue of *T&L* or visit the OFNC web site) but individual committee members have submitted comments.

Now that the second phase of public consultation has been completed I would like to offer a few comments. We, as residents outside of the Lands for Life study area, were not originally intended by the Ontario Government to be involved at all. Conservation-oriented groups are conspicuous by their absence from the Round Table membership, which is mainly comprised of represent-



atives of trapping, hunting and fishing groups and the forest and mining industries. The ideas of PPL and its supporters were totally or largely ignored by the Boreal East and West round tables. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence round table was officially neutral by offering four options for comment, one of them said to be the PPL position.

We must wait for the official reports to find out whether our suggestions and the views of all those in the Partnership are making a difference. If enough of us express our views, they will make a difference. Lands for Life is a political process and becomes even more so after the Round Table reports are completed – your letters and phone calls will be the ammunition – here are the names of some of the politicians who should hear from you:

Hon. Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario  
Room 281,  
Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON, M7A 1W3  
Fax (416) 325-3745

Mr. Bernard Granmaître,  
MPP Ottawa East  
150 Montreal Road, Suite 208  
Vanier, ON, K1L 8H2  
Tel. 744-4484; Fax 744-0889

Hon. John Snobelen,  
Minister of Natural Resources  
Room 6630, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley St. W.  
Toronto, ON, M7A 1W3

Mr. Garry Guzzo, MPP, Ottawa Rideau  
885 Meadowlands Drive  
Ottawa, ON, K2C 3N2  
Tel. 727-2657; Fax 224-3306

Hon. Norman Sterling, MPP Carleton  
(and Minister of Environment)  
Box 535, 1143-A Mill Street  
Manotick, ON, K4M 1A5  
Tel. 692-2403; Fax 692-0869

Mr. Dalton McGuinty, MPP Ottawa South  
1795 Kilborn Avenue  
Ottawa, ON, K1H 6N1  
Tel. 736-9573; Fax 736-7374  
email: [dalton\\_mcguinty-mpp@ontla.ola.org](mailto:dalton_mcguinty-mpp@ontla.ola.org)

Mr. John Baird, MPP Nepean  
301 Moodie Drive, Suite 119  
Nepean, ON, K2H 9C4  
Tel. 828-2020; Fax 828-6962  
e-mail: [mailbox@johnbaird.com](mailto:mailbox@johnbaird.com)

Mr. Gilles Morin, MPP Carleton East  
1980 Ogilvie Road, Suite 216  
Gloucester, ON, K1J 9L3  
Tel. 745-6899; Fax 744-0889

Mr. Alex Cullen, MPP, Ottawa West  
Lincoln Heights Galleria, 2nd Level,  
2525 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K2B7Z2  
Tel. 596-2016; Fax 596-9744

Mr. Richard Patten, MPP Ottawa Centre  
1292 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON, K1Y 3A9  
Tel. 722-6414; Fax 722-6703

You can write to the newspapers, or call the talk shows or the MPP's offices if you find it hard to write letters. The main thing is: do something, and feel better!

### Petrie Island

This island in the Ottawa River is about 4 km east of Orleans and at the end of Trim Road. It is significant because the woods on it contain a regionally unusual combination of hackberry, butternut, and bitternut hickory as well as the rare bladdernut shrub. At present, there is a sand extraction operation on the eastern third of the island. The balance is largely wooded with a few former cottage lots and one inhabited house.

The Municipality of Cumberland is proposing to build a serviced marina and recreational area which would include over 300 berths, nearly 500 car parking spaces, a beach-picnic and recreational area including an amphitheatre and tennis courts. This would replace the sand extraction area and cover almost all of the eastern half of the island. The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) favours this site for a bridge to Quebec. This bridge would run beside the marina development, further reducing the available natural area on the island.

The significant woods are mainly on the western part of the island. The marshes around the island and along the adjacent shore are among the finest in the region. Together the wooded western part of the island and adjacent marshes form an area of tranquil natural beauty. The proposed developments will significantly harm it. The rare woodland will be endangered by the loss of much of its buffer zone. RMOC owns most of the island. Its only protection results from its location in the river flood plain where development is restricted.

Friends of Petrie Island (FOPI) have contacted the OFNC for support to have all of Petrie Island maintained as public open space with no major development on it. They want to develop a picnic site and nature trails. This summer they are operating a temporary picnic site for five weeks in August-September. It is very well used. The picnic site received only temporary approval because it conflicts with the other proposed uses.

Stephen Darbyshire has led a combined group (OFNC and FOPI) on a tour of the island's significant natural features. FOPI have been provided with copies of OFNC submissions on Petrie Island, done for the 1978-80 Regional Official Plan review by Albert Dugal and Joyce and Allan Reddoch. Christine Hanrahan is revising the inventory of flora and fauna from that submission and the list is growing rapidly. FOPI would like support for their option from the broader regional community. You can send comments to:

The Regional Chair, Robert Chiarelli      or  
111 Lisgar Street  
Ottawa, K2P 2L7

Brian Coburn, Mayor  
255 Centrum Blvd, Suite 100  
Cumberland, Ontario, K1E 3V8

### **South Gloucester**

While the Leitrim wetlands have received much publicity, another area close by in South Gloucester, with a diverse flora that is regionally, provincially, and nationally significant, has been overlooked. Once again it is work from twenty years ago that establishes its importance. In 1978, OFNC members Albert Dugal, Joyce and Allan Reddoch went so far as to prepare detailed plans for a conservation area there. Albert Dugal ranks it the second most significant flora in the region, after Mer Bleue. However, it is not protected in any way. Part of it has vanished in a quarry. More could go the same way. The City of Gloucester apparently owns about 100 acres of it and the RMOC also owns some of it, which formerly belonged to the NCC.

The Conservation Committee visited the Gloucester site and is trying to get information on its status from the Environmental Advisory Committee of the City of Gloucester.

### **Southern Parkway Corridor**

The parkway was removed from the RMOC official plan a few years ago, but the corridor still exists as local open space in southern and western Ottawa. The NCC now regards it as surplus land and in the Hunt Club area is proposing a residential subdivision between Riverside Drive and the Airport Parkway. This development would eliminate the only wildlife corridor between the Rideau River and Mer Bleue since the greenbelt corridor to the south is blocked by the airport, a less than adequate wildlife habitat! The NCC is apparently prepared to spare McCarthy Woods which form part of the corridor, but they do not plan to maintain the corridor itself. A recent City of Ottawa neighbourhood plan identifies the areas for potential future development. The OFNC Conservation Committee is still seeking information before considering what to do about it.

### **Watts Creek proposed waterpark**

Nepean Council approved the park despite a series of objections from community associations, the OFNC and the Association to Save Our Greenbelt (ATSOG). ATSOG has begun an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. The developer failed in an attempt to have the appeal dismissed as frivolous, so it is due to be heard on 28th September 1998.

For more information on any of the above or to comment please call the OFNC Conservation Committee Chairman, Stan Rosenbaum, at 596-4288 or email: [srosen@magma.ca](mailto:srosen@magma.ca) ✉

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# *In Memoriam:* Loris Shano Russell 1904-1998

*C.R. Harington*

Curator of Quaternary Zoology Emeritus  
Canadian Museum of Nature



*Reprinted from Rotunda/Winter, 1970, with permission from the Royal Ontario Museum.*

Loris Russell, predeceased by his devoted wife and field-work companion, Grace, died July 6 in the veteran's wing of Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Science Centre. He was 94.

A man is remembered in different ways by the various people who knew him. For example, a mother could remember her son as a child, whereas later acquaintances would miss that part of his life entirely. My recollections of Loris Russell are of a man about 60 – near the time when he left the National Museum of Canada (now several independent national museums) in 1963.



Then, he was of medium height, gray-haired with a moustache and a distinctly military bearing (an ex-major in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals from 1942-45) favouring "mufti" of navy blue blazer and gray flannels. Above all, I recall his concern for and encouragement of a younger paleontologist (a student of past life), and his great courtesy in putting his heavy administrative load aside to have tea, biscuits and a chat about fossils.

His interests were surprisingly broad: vertebrate paleontology – especially Cretaceous and early Tertiary mammals; fossil molluscs; Cretaceous and Tertiary stratigraphy (a study of the sequence of geological deposits) and museology. Perhaps his greatest contributions were as a paleontologist and administrator at two of Canada's foremost museums, the Royal Ontario Museum (Assistant Director, Royal Ontario Museum of Palaeontology 1937-45; Director 1948-50; Head, Life Sciences Division 1963-64; Chief Biologist 1964-71; Curator Emeritus 1971-98) and the National Museum of Canada (Chief, Zoology Section 1950-56; Director, Natural History Branch 1956-63 and Acting Director, Human History Branch 1958-63). He was also a professor of the University of Toronto (Assistant Professor of Palaeontology 1937-48, Professor, Department of Geology 1963-70, Professor Emeritus 1970-98) who sparked an interest in the earth sciences in many students – several of whom became professionals in that field like John Storer, the present Yukon Paleontologist. Rufus Churcher, a younger University of Toronto colleague of Loris, despite being frustrated in his earlier endeavours to become his graduate student, counted himself one of his unregistered and unofficial students and continued to learn from his long association with him.

Loris Russell was also deeply interested in social history, particularly the material culture of North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. Indeed 12 of his 162 publications (131 are on paleontology and geology, and 19 on museology) concern material culture. He was an internationally-respected authority on lighting, having published *A Heritage of Light* (1968). Other books like *Handy Things to Have Around the House* (1979) and *Everyday Life in Colonial Canada* (1980) indicate the breadth of his interests beyond the earth sciences.

Few people realize that he was a ham radio operator, and a person who was fascinated by technology. He invented a special machine-driven, dry-screening apparatus for concentrating fossils from fossil-bearing sediments. When he used this machine at the Kleinfelder Farm site near Rockglen, Saskatchewan, it led to an embarrassment of riches that was offered to other institutions to save the ROM storage space! The fascinating story of discovering and working this rich Miocene (about 15 million years old) locality is immortalized in Loris

Russell's popular article in *Rotunda* (1970) "The Great Saskatchewan Mouse Mine."

Although his paleontological field work focused mainly on late Cretaceous and early Tertiary mammals of Alberta and Saskatchewan (British Columbia, Quebec, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado were part of his fossil-prospecting range too), he also collected and studied dinosaurs (e.g., his 37-page monograph *Dinosaur Hunting in Western Canada*). Indeed, he was first to suggest in print that dinosaurs might have been warm-blooded, a hypothesis that gained vogue later and is still strongly supported by many paleontologists.

Born in Brooklyn, New York to Matilda Shano of Newfoundland and Milan Winslow Russell of New York, Loris moved to Calgary with his parents when he was 4, attending public and high school there. He graduated from the University of Alberta with a B.Sc. (geology) in 1927 and from Princeton with a M.A. in 1929 and a Ph.D. (paleontology) in 1930. At Princeton, he was undoubtedly inspired by his teacher, the great geologist and paleontologist William Berryman Scott. While at university, Loris spent the summers (1925-29) working as a student assistant at the Research Council of Alberta in Edmonton. After receiving his doctorate, he served as an assistant paleontologist (1930-36) and assistant geologist (1936-37) with the Geological Survey of Canada, prior to holding important posts at the Royal Ontario Museum and the National Museum of Canada.

Loris Russell received many honours: Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; LL.D. University of Alberta; Willet G. Miller Medal of the Royal Society of Canada; Diploma with distinction, Museums Association of Great Britain; Canadian Silver Jubilee Medal; Billings Medal of the Geological Association of Canada. In 1976, *Athlon: Essays on Palaeontology in Honour of Loris Shano Russell* was published by the Royal Ontario Museum, and included papers by his many colleagues. He was also president of several national and international societies: Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (1958-59); Canadian Museums Association (1962-64); Royal Canadian Institute (1971-72); International Paleontological Association (1972-76).

Although he retired in 1971, he and Grace continued to carry out fieldwork in good weather at fossil localities in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. They used a trailer at Pine Lake southeast of Red Deer as their base of operations. And for more than 20 years after his retirement he visited his office at the Royal Ontario Museum at least once a week – even after his hip operation at age 90! His office stands just as he left it. It looks out from the Royal Ontario Museum across to Charles Street by Queen's Park. It lacks only one thing, the presence of one of Canada's greatest paleontologists.

**Daniel Brunton (with notes from the late Herb Groh) adds the following:**

Dr. Russell has been a member of our Club for 65 years, having joined in 1933. (Readers will have noted that his name has appeared on our "Golden Anniversary Membership List.") Dr. Russell was on the OFNC Council from January 1934 until October 1936, and again from 1950 to 1963. He was Vice-president of the OFNC from 1954-1956 and President from 1957-1958. In 1972 he was awarded Honorary Membership in our Club.

Dr. Russell encouraged interest in geology. He gave several geological talks and wrote articles on the local geology for the OFNC Newsletter. He promoted the publication of Dr. Alice Wilson's "Geology of the Ottawa District" (1954). He was a member of the Special Lectures Committee and the Excursions & Lectures Committee.☐

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## Call for Nominations: The 1999 Council of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

*Frank Pope, Chair, Nominations Committee*

Any member of the Club may nominate a candidate for the Council. Nominations require the signature of the nominator and a statement by the nominee of willingness to serve in the position for which he or she is nominated. Please provide some relevant background information about the nominee. The deadline for nominations is 15 November 1998.☐

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# The Macoun Field Club Celebrates its 50th Anniversary

*Robert E. Lee*



*Maple tree planted at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Macoun Field Club. Photo by Laurie Consaul*

Fifty years ago, on a May morning in 1948, several keen young people joined Bill Baldwin\* of the National Museum of Canada for a new venture in natural history. Together they launched the junior branch of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' – the Macoun Field Club. Kids came then to satisfy their eager curiosity about the natural world, and they continue to do so now. In June, at the close of the 1997-98 school year, the Macoun Field Club celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special gathering at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden building in Ottawa.

More than a dozen former leaders representing every decade of the Club's existence – and even one founding member – were on hand to be introduced to the current membership. So great was the enthusiasm that Eric Mills, one of the young boys at that very first meeting, had come from Halifax, and Dr. Ed Bousfield, the earliest living leader of the Macoun Club, came from Victoria.



Dr. Bousfield, then an invertebrate zoologist with the Museum, took over from Bill Baldwin in 1953. "It was a time when the Museum was expanding, and the staff were growing," he remembers, "so we had lots of time to help young people become interested. In those days, there were jobs for young students to grow into, and they became biologists and geologists and archaeologists."

Eric Mills, now a professor at Dalhousie University, is a classic example. "It was through the Macoun Field Club that my interests changed from ornithology to marine biology," he tells us. "I am still a birdwatcher, but it was the Macoun Field Club that made me first a marine biologist, and then an oceanographer." It is a story that has been repeated over and over again through the years. The Macoun Club, Dr. Bousfield observed, has had an enormous influence in developing careers for young biologists.

Others who, despite their interest, could not return to Ottawa to attend the celebrations, have written to confirm this view. Loney Dickson\* says that the Macoun Club was his stepping stone to a career in ornithology with the Canadian Wildlife Service: "It gave me the chance to meet and (as a volunteer) work with world renowned professionals such as Stu MacDonald\*, Earl Godfrey\*, and Irwin Brodo\*." It was because of their enthusiasm, says Robin Collins,\* "that a very lucky bunch of young people were given opportunities, direction and stimulation we might never have gotten otherwise."

While we naturally take great pride and interest in those whose careers have an obvious connection with the activities and focus of the Macoun Club, we suspect, and in some cases know, that those early years had their influence, no matter what the career choice. Although she did not take a job in the field of biology, for instance, Zofia Laubitz\* has been a member of two Montreal-area natural history clubs and has served on the executive of one of them. "Such is my conviction of the importance of natural history clubs for children," she says, "that I have been involved in a project to start one up here."

Many of those who could only write to us, as well as those at the reunion, speak of their tremendous enjoyment of their time in the Macoun Club. "I look back on those years as the best in my life," says Loney. "It was where I made some very important and life-lasting friends."

"It was a place to meet people who didn't think you were weird for being interested in nature," adds Zofia; "it provided an environment that supported kids' inherent interest in nature, rather than letting it dwindle away." Eric Mills remembers it that way, too: "It made me feel part of a group with real devotion to the outdoors, to the living world and its environment." After seeing how little kids and grown members shared observations at the June party, Eric expressed

his delight at finding the feel of the Macoun Field Club hasn't changed in fifty years.

That there should have been such constancy is all the more remarkable given the almost complete shift in leadership, from Museum scientists like Ed Bousfield, to volunteers from the OFNC, like myself. No doubt it is significant that so many of us are former members ourselves, and grew up with a definite sense of the Club's direction and purpose.

All came expecting certain other aspects of the Macoun Club's year-end party to be repeated at this year's celebrations -- the presentation of awards (including the W.K.W. Baldwin Award), distribution of the Club's annual 100-page publication (the "Little Bear"), and a showing of Bill Mason's classic film, "Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes."

A special event took place outdoors, between rain showers: the replanting on the Wildlife Garden grounds of a native Sugar Maple rescued from an expanding development in the region.

In addition, there was a slide show featuring leaders from Bill Baldwin onward; apparently field trips haven't changed in essential interest in fifty years. Historical materials were laid out for all to see, and time provided for people to get together. "Both Eric Mills and I had fun poring over the classic scrapbooks and swapping memories with Ed Bousfield and Stu MacDonald and others," says Francis Cook.\* "It is so heartening to see the Club we saw at its germination thrive so well today."

The celebrations were rounded out with an evening get-together in the Gatineaus at the home of the Potvin-Bernal family (their daughter, Sara, was President of the Club's Junior group this year). As the fading light forced a retreat indoors from an impromptu field trip (complete with rare lichens, large insects, and cooperative amphibians), talk gradually turned from memories of the past to hopes for the future of the Macoun Field Club.

\* Like John Macoun, in whose honour the Club is named, Bill Baldwin actually represented both sponsors -- the Museum and the OFNC. After long years of interest in the Macoun Club, he died in 1979. Loney Dickson was a member in the late 1960s and 1970s. Stewart MacDonald, an arctic ethologist at the Museum, served as Chairman of the Macoun Club in the mid-sixties. Earl Godfrey, Museum ornithologist and author of "Birds of Canada," encouraged many members. Irwin Brodo, a Museum lichenologist, was heavily involved in the leadership of the Macoun Club from 1966 to 1974. Robin Collins was a member during those same years; he later became Chairman from 1984 to 1986. Zofia Laubitz was also a member in the late 1960s and early 1970s.



*Macoun 50th Anniversary, 13 June 1998. Photo by Laurie Consaul.*

Francis Cook was a member in the 1950s and came back as Chairman in the early 1960s; he joined the Museum staff as a herpetologist, and has been editor of "The Canadian Field-Naturalist" for some years now. Just about all of these people have supported the Macoun Field Club in still other ways – as advisors, mentors, and expert speakers. We thank them, and all like them.❧

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## The Macoun Field Club Requires New Leaders

*Robert E. Lee*

Chairman, Macoun Field Club Committee

Following the departure of two people at the same time, in June, the Macoun Field Club is in urgent need of new leaders. The principal need is for someone who would enjoy working with the high-school students of the Senior group, which meets Fridays after school. We also require a second leader for the younger groups (grades 3-8), which meet twice a month before noon on Saturdays. All groups have both indoor meetings, where they hear about every facet of the natural world from a variety of expert speakers, and frequent field trips on weekends.

There is considerable latitude in what makes a Macoun Field Club leader. Some are able naturalists or scientists, and some are only beginning to explore the natural world, just as the members are. All find ready acceptance from both the kids, who are highly motivated and fun to be with, and their fellow leaders, who find their involvement highly rewarding. But given our desperate circumstances, we are looking for volunteers who are willing to play a major role in the leadership.

If you are able to assist the Macoun Field Club as a leader, or would like to know more about it, please contact one of us:

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Robert E. Lee      | 623-8123 |
| Barbara Gaerter    | 741-2564 |
| Stephen Darbyshire | 231-5458 |
| or, OFNC           | 722-3050 |

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# The Status of the Fragile Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*) in Nepean, Ontario

Laurie Consaul, Stephen Darbyshire and Albert Dugal

"Cactus Find in Nepean earns mention in botanical records":  
Ottawa Citizen, June 12, 1987, page B1.

What has happened to this cactus a decade later?

The little, or fragile prickly pear cactus, *Opuntia fragilis*, is the smallest cactus in the genus *Opuntia*. It is a sun-loving species found on prairies, sand-hills and rocky areas from British Columbia to western Ontario, and south to California and Texas (Scoggan 1979). At the extremes of its range in the boreal forest of Canada and northern Alabama, it is found isolated on rock outcrops as widely separated populations. Vegetative propagation seems to allow for successful dispersal to distant sites (Frego and Staniforth 1985).

## Vulnerable in Ontario

*Opuntia fragilis* is considered a vulnerable species in Ontario (Klinkenberg 1987), recorded from three or four sites in the province (Hancock 1998). In western Ontario, it has been found on gneiss rock outcrops just off Lake of the Woods Provincial Park (Specimen: 4 Aug. 1961, Garton 9213, DAO), and in Rainy River District (26 July 1896, W. McInnis, s.n., CAN). In eastern Ontario, the population at Kaladar (Beschel 1967) has been known since at least the 1930's (W.G. Dore, in litt.), where it occurs on gneiss outcrops in the shade of Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), or shallow soil over granitic bedrock (e.g.,

## Cactus find in Nepean earns mention in botanical records

By Vivian Bercovici  
Citizen staff writer

In what is considered a Canadian botanical record, cactus has been discovered growing naturally in Nepean, the furthest east the plant has been found in Canada.

The fragile prickly pear, a common type of cactus, was discovered Easter Sunday by Zuzana Fergler, of Ottawa, while she was out for a walk.

Botanists at the National Museum of Natural Science have determined the plant is at least 30 years old.

Carol Campbell, a botany technician with the museum, refused to disclose the exact location of the plants, to limit "cactus-poaching."

There have already been three cases of poachers digging up the plants since the patch was found.

Cactus plants have been known to fetch prices in the thousands of dollars.

They are protected from poaching under the Convention on Trade and Endangered Species, and the importing and exporting of cacti is regulated in Canada.

The prickly pear cacti grow in large clumps, usually less than six inches above ground in Western Canada.

The cactus survives the cold



— Bruno Schumberger, Citizen

### The prickly pear cacti

winter by producing a sort of natural anti-freeze, and is also insulated by snow.

The only other major cactus find east of Lake of the Woods was in Kaladar, Ont., about 60 kilometres northwest of Kingston, in the 1940s.

Those cacti are still growing, but Campbell said a serious poaching problem exists.

Figure 1. Reprinted with permission from the Ottawa Citizen.

specimens: 4 Aug. 1947, Dore and Senn 47-671, DAO; 2 November 1966, Dore 22811, DAO; 21 May 1987, Shchepanek, Dugal and Ley 7546, CAN). The report of Frego et al. (1996) on this population near Kaladar and hypotheses of its origins rekindled interest in the small population in Nepean, Ontario.

This population in Nepean was first found in 1987 by Zuzana Pergler of Ottawa, while she was out for a walk. Carol Campbell provided information for an Ottawa Citizen article by Vivian Bercovici (*Figure 1*). Since that time this site has been visited by several knowledgeable individuals. The origin of the cactus plants here is a mystery, although they were almost certainly introduced through human activities. The persistence and possible future spread of these plants are questions of interest and concern.



*Figure 2. Opuntia fragilis in Nepean, Ontario, robust main patch in flower, June 1987. Photo by M. Shchepanek.*

When discovered in 1987 the largest patch was about 0.6 m across (*Figure 2*), very healthy and vigorous, with scattered satellite plants covering a total area of approximately 6 m<sup>2</sup>. In June of 1987 about half a dozen flowers were produced (*Figures 2 and 3*), although no fruit was found later in the year. Two other smaller but healthy patches were also found in the area. From the size of the colony, number of pads, and spread of individual plants, the age of the colony was estimated at 30 years in 1987.

No witnesses to the introduction of this cactus have been found. Speculations were made over the years that it was planted, dumped in a refuse pile, or otherwise accidentally introduced, perhaps on cattle or clothing. Information from the National Capital Commission (NCC) indicates that this area was pastureland until purchased by the NCC in February 1959. Air photos, taken during the years when this cactus may have been established, show no evidence of old buildings, large gardens, or piles of refuse. In the photos taken between 1945



Figure 3. Closeup of one of the many *Opuntia fragilis* plants in bloom, Nepean, Ontario, 27 June 1987. Photo by S. Darbyshire.

and 1977 a path is evident from a nearby farm passing within 10-20 metres of the cactus site. In 1968 wheel tracks and two dumped or parked cars were visible at the roadside near the cactus patch area, although this is probably after the time of introduction of the cactus. Jack Pine trees were planted in 1964 as a nurse crop for natural hardwood regeneration (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources). Because of the severe habitat, these pines were very slow growing (D. Wolthausen, personal communication), not even visible in 1971 air photos, and still tiny in 1977. Therefore, the cacti had a very good habitat for survival.

In the summers of 1996 and 1997 this population was found again and its status determined. In 1996, the main patch consisted of only four small plants with any life, two of which had three pads (one detached), and the other two had only two pads each. All but the terminal pads were in very poor condition, if alive at all. In fact, only one little pad was bright green. Several dead plants were also found in the vicinity, hidden under the long grass and forbs. We looked for other patches that once existed. One was found a couple of metres away that had a single green, almost healthy looking pad. Three other pads were dead and blackened. In June 1997, only one plant from the first of these patches was found, shown in Figure 4.





Figure 4. The remaining *Opuntia fragilis* pads near death, having lost most of their spines, 18 April 1997. Photo by L. Consaul.

Several factors may account for the demise of this population:

#### Adaptations for Living in Extreme Climates

Out of approximately 2000 species of cactus, fewer than 50 are cold-resistant (Bernshaw and Bernshaw 1984). Of these, *Opuntia fragilis* has the greatest freezing tolerance (Loik and Nobel 1993a), and is also the most northern species (Benson 1982).

Freezing tolerance is increased through acclimation to cooler temperatures in the fall. Tolerance change in *O. fragilis* is usually about 14–15°C for acclimated plants (Loik and Nobel 1993b), but may be as great as 24°C in some populations (Loik and Nobel 1993a). During cold acclimation, *Opuntia fragilis* stems lose about 34% of their water (Loik and Nobel 1993a).

In *O. fragilis*, the LT<sub>50</sub> (i.e. the temperature that is lethal to 50% of the population) varies among populations adapted to different climatic conditions (Loik and Nobel 1993a). In Loik and Nobel's (1993a) study, plants from Kaladar, Ontario, were found to have LT<sub>50</sub> = -20.4°C, while populations examined from the Canadian prairies had higher tolerances: e.g., Lethbridge, AB: -28.3°C; Fort St. John, BC: -44.3°C; Bird River, MB: -22.6°C; Virden, MB: -48.9°C. The average LT<sub>50</sub> for *O. fragilis* was -29°C.

Insulation by snow does not appear to be a major factor in freeze tolerance (Loik and Nobel 1993a). In western Canada where *O. fragilis* populations frequently experience temperatures of -40°C, plants usually grow in areas of little snow accumulation (Speirs 1978). Snow will help protect the cactus from the



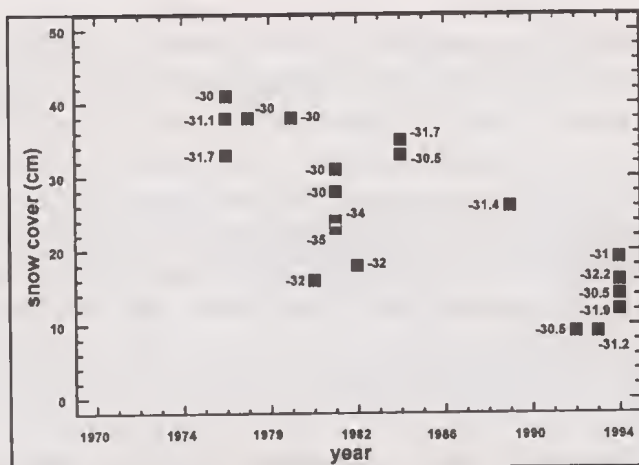


Figure 5. Days when minimum temperatures in the Ottawa region were equal to or less than  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , plotted against centimetres of snow cover. Data from weather observatory, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

coldest temperatures, however. We examined the possibility that the Nepean plants might have been weakened by severe cold some time between 1987 and 1997, protected by less than 10 cm of snow. In Figure 5, days when the minimum temperatures were equal or less than  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  are plotted for each year (1995 and 1996 are included but there were no days this cold) against the amount of snow cover. This figure shows that in 1992-3 there were 2 days with temperatures of  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  or less, and less than 10 cm of snow. If the  $\text{LT}_{50}$  of this population is near the average of  $-29^{\circ}\text{C}$ , the temperatures on these days might have contributed to severe death in the population.

### Shade

This population was growing in a Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*) plantation, in shallow soil over Nepean sandstone. Therefore, since its origin in this area, the cactus has been growing in a very similar habitat to those populations found in shallow soil on gneiss or granite outcrops, in low vegetation, mentioned above. The Jack Pines have grown slowly during the time of establishment of the cactus, and therefore did not play a great role of shading them at that time.

As well as reproducing and dispersing by seed, these plants develop mature pads (or cladodes) towards their tips and these frequently break off and will root by themselves (Benson 1982; Frego and Staniforth 1985). The joints of the pads in this species break easily compared with other species of cactus, hence the name *fragilis*. These propagules may spread by rolling downhill until they lodge and root in soil, by floating down rivers for many days to be stranded on distant shores, or by clinging to fur or clothing. Frego and Staniforth (1985) found that, while soil type or vegetation type did not affect establishment, low

light levels resulted in less successful establishment of these vegetative propagules. Personal experience of the third author growing plants of this species transplanted to his garden from Manitoba, showed that pads falling into tall grass perished.

Experiments in Nebraska by Burger and Louda (1994 and 1995) showed that dense vegetation also inhibited the growth of *O. fragilis* plants that had been successfully established. Not only was there a direct effect of limiting light available for cactus growth, but also denser surrounding vegetation supported larger populations of cactus-feeding insects. In field trials new growth of *O. fragilis* more than doubled after two years in plots where surrounding vegetation was removed.

At the Nepean site, the Jack Pines have grown dramatically, and other vegetation such as White Cedar, Wild Grape, grasses and forbs are increasing in number and size under the shadier conditions. This is the most likely explanation for the reduction of plants in the last 10 years.

Why would the plants not establish nearby, in adjacent areas that are more open, sunny and rocky? Woodchucks (groundhogs, *Marmota monax*) could potentially spread cactus pads. In spite of the very rocky nature of the area, there are a number of woodchuck holes around which were active in 1987. These holes now appear abandoned, possibly because of the shading effect of the Jack Pines and White Cedars, or increased traffic to the new Hwy. 416 on the road near the site. The reduced woodchuck activity in the area may be one of the reasons why the cactus has not spread to more favourable neighbouring spots.

For seedling establishment in cacti, soil moisture is usually the most critical factor (Jordon and Nobel 1982). An investigation into the patterns of precipitation 1987-1997 did not reveal a stretch of years relatively drier than average that would have prevented seedling establishment. Moreover, as fruit were not seen in 1987 when the population was flourishing (or any other year), it is unlikely that seedlings would have played a major factor in propagation of this population. The lack of fruit in this population might indicate that a single genotype of cactus was introduced here, and suggest that prickly pear flowers are self-incompatible. Little evidence of fertile fruit exists for *Opuntia fragilis* (K. Hancock, personal communication, Frego and Staniforth 1985, Domico 1996). However, Speirs (1989) describes irritable stamens in *Opuntia*, that bend towards the pistils when touched (by insects, for example), and which should be evolutionarily advantageous in self-compatible flowers.

One more cause for the demise may involve human poaching of the plants for cultivation, which has been a problem at the site near Kaladar, Ontario (Frego *et al.* 1996).

The origin of this cactus colony in Nepean remains a mystery. Its habitat has changed drastically over the last 20-30 years, so that the old patches are dying out and no new plants seem to be establishing. This is probably for the best, as the spread of this cactus in the Ottawa area would be an uncomfortable and unwanted addition to our flora.

We thank Doug Wolthausen (NCC) for providing information from the NCC and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on the previous ownership and plantings in this site, and Ken Hancock for discussions on Canadian cacti.

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# Hairy-tailed Mole at Cantley, Quebec

Daniel F. Brunton



X = new Cantley record; dots = other recent (<1970) records;  
triangle = 19th Century Ottawa-Carleton record

Figure 1: Location of Hairy-tailed Mole populations in the Ottawa District

The Hairy-tailed or Brewer's Mole (*Parascalops breweri*) has traditionally been considered one of the most uncommon and inconspicuous land mammals in the Ottawa District. Most records are based on animals found dead along trailsides and the few recent reports are all from the Outaouais side. The only Ottawa-Carleton record, in fact, dates from an 1888 specimen collected at what is now Woodroffe Avenue near the Ottawa River (Rand 1945). The closest recent Ontario record is from along the Madawaska River in Renfrew County (Dobbyn 1994).

The Hairy-tailed Mole is not a common creature anywhere within its primarily more southern Canadian range. It is found in densities of only 3 to 30 per



hectare, and is described as being a solitary animal (van Zyll de Jong 1983). The abundance of tunnels observed in the same site over a number of years, however, (e.g., at Source Lake, Algonquin Park, [personal observation] and Cantley, Quebec [see below]) suggests that it can be at least semi-colonial. Even more than our more common Star-nosed Mole (*Scalopus cristata*), this creature spends virtually all of its life hidden within a network of tunnels which it typically excavates just below the surface of the ground. As winter approaches it extends the tunnel system down almost half a metre to a point below the frost line. From a winter nest constructed within this deep tunnel complex the mole continues its search for invertebrate prey. Earthworms constitute a very large proportion of its diet (van Zyll de Jong 1983).

The last recorded sightings of Hairy-tailed Moles in the Ottawa District were made over a decade ago; in January 1986 an animal which had apparently died after being flooded out of its tunnels during a winter thaw was photographed at Lac Johnston near Wakefield, Gatineau County (Brunton 1987). Another was found dead along a trailside a few kilometres north of Thurso in Papineau County that fall (Gawn 1986). In both cases, the animals were observed in areas of relatively dry, sandy, rocky uplands on the Canadian Shield. The Star-nosed Mole, in contrast, is usually found in lower, wetter woodland habitats and is a regular if only locally common resident across Ottawa-Carleton (Rand 1945).

An additional record of Hairy-tailed Mole has been established in the Ottawa District with the discovery of an animal on the edge of a road across a steep, rocky slope at the edge of a submature Sugar Maple - White Pine - Eastern Hemlock forest by the Gatineau River (at "The Grange", R. Phillips' residence, Summer Road) in Cantley, Gatineau County by the writer and Karen McIntosh on 30 May 1998. At first glance the animal looked like a very large Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*). A second look quickly revealed the diagnostic combination of fleshy, over-sized, massively-muscular feet extending straight out on absurdly short front legs, its plain, somewhat pointed, pink, hairless nose and its stubby, short-hairy tail (Peterson 1966; van Zyll de Jong 1983). The mole was dead, having been captured by "Young Dan", the resident dog. The mole's body was still warm, so it had clearly not been caught long before our arrival. Since the dog had been in the immediate vicinity for some time, it is evident that the mole had been 'collected' at or near where we observed it. Indeed, Bob Phillips reports (personal communication) that mole tunnels have been a regular and troublesome feature in the lawn at "The Grange" for some years. No specimen was made from the somewhat mangled body but each of the diagnostic features noted above were observed by both observers.

With only five other populations of this curious mammal known from the Ottawa District (Figure 1), the Hairy-tailed Mole remains a rare and obscure member of our fauna. Other populations are to be expected in the Gatineau Hills and will no doubt be discovered there in coming years – with or without the aid of exuberant young dogs! Although not reported from Ottawa-Carleton for over a century, Hairy-tailed Moles may well be found on dry, rocky, wooded ridges in the Carp Hills of Kanata/ West Carleton or in the sand plain woodlands east of the Rideau River.

Readers are urged to be on the look-out for the tell-tale low-mounded tunnels in dry upland sites elsewhere in the District.

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## Albino Robin

*Photo by Dianne Leafloor*



Last spring, Dianne Leafloor of McLaren Landing was astonished to find an albino robin in her backyard. It was newly fledged and being attended by parents of normal plumage. She took this photo to document her sighting. □

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# OFNC Autumn Colours Tour

## October 5, 1997

*Annette Murray*



*Entering Silver Queen Mine, photo by Eileen Evans.*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club's Autumn Colours Tour to Murphys Point Provincial Park, led by Eileen Evans and Pearl Peterkin, was another triumph of the Club's many outings. We were blessed with an entire day of sunny, warm weather and with a clear blue sky which formed a perfect backdrop to the outstanding autumn colours everywhere.

Our day began on time, 8:30 a.m., and the school bus with 34 enthusiastic naturalists on board, got underway for the one and a half hour drive to Murphys Point Provincial Park. We soon started our bird list of the day as we saw a large flock of Canada Geese flying in V-formation overhead.

At the entrance to the Park we noticed a large, colourful, highbush cranberry shrub with many of its acid red berries at their best. Further along, a saffron coloured, wooly bear caterpillar took our interest, and one or two garter snakes slithered by. As some of the group were looking down, others were looking up and saw chickadees, Blue Jays, woodpeckers, crows, Ring-billed Gulls, to name a few.

We followed a lovely woodland path to a beach on the Big Rideau Lake. Along the way we saw *Amanita virosa* (Destroying Angel) – a pure white mushroom which is deadly poisonous, a nice cluster of matured Indian Pipe, and on a log nearby, colourful, overlapping clusters of *Trametes versicolor* (= *Polyporus versicolor*, Turkey Tail Polypore). We saw, too, several clusters of *Dryopteris marginalis* (Marginal Shield Fern) which grow in rosettes of several fronds and have round sori on the margins of the pinules. Other ferns of interest were *Polypodium virginianum* (Common Polypody) and *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas Fern).

The peacefulness and tranquillity of the beach area were appreciated by all – a Great Blue Heron standing still and silent in the distance, an Osprey nest close by and the water calm and clear. A short drive in the bus took us to Hoggs Bay for lunch. The picnic tables were in a beautiful spot by the Bay, surrounded by trees of breathtaking colour.

During lunch we discussed differences between the Red and White Oaks. Their respective leaves were produced and we saw that Red Oak leaves have sharply-pointed, bristle-tipped lobes whereas White Oak leaves are smaller, hairless underneath, and have more shallow and evenly formed, rounded lobes without bristles. The White Oak is extremely rare in the Ottawa Region and can be confused with the Bur Oak [See Dan Brunton's article in *T&L* 31(3): 100-108].

We also discussed the differences between Red and White Ash, trees which are difficult to distinguish. Both have elliptical leaves but the White Ash leaves are more rounded with serrations not as deep as on the Red Ash. The bark of the Red Ash is not as deeply furrowed as that of the White Ash.

After lunch we again boarded the bus for a short drive to another area of the Park and a very interesting tour of the Silver Queen Mine. Here we noticed Turkey Vultures flying overhead. We parked near the Lally Homestead, and our guide talked about the difficult, early pioneer life of the Lallys. Their house seemed so small for two adults and nine children. It was the first time many of us had seen a stump-puller, an essential implement of the early settlers.



The Silver Queen Mine is a one km walk along an easy trail from the parking lot. The forest is kept at bay by constant mowing on either side off the path, thus providing ideal habitat for the black rat snake. Before entering the mine we were each issued a hard hat and proceeded down a corridor to a large pit, open to the sky, where our guide told us about the early days of mining for mica, apatite, and feldspar. The Baby and Silver Queen Mines ceased operating by 1920 but during their active years they provided another source of employment for area residents. A short visit to the Bunk House completed the tour which all agreed was interesting and informative and came as a complete surprise to the group.

On our return to Ottawa, another highlight of the day for baker lovers on board, was a short stop at the Richmond Bakery. This completed a full and enjoyable outing with beautiful autumn colours at every twist and turn of the road. The end of a very special day!

We were pleased to have Mary Stuart with us on this outing as well as some of the newer members of the Club.☐

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## Burnside Pit

*Frank Pope*

You may have noticed references to the Burnside Pit in bird reports. In recent years it has become a popular birding spot. The pit is located on the east side of Moodie Drive south of Trail Road.

The Burnside Pit is an operating sand pit. Please note that it is private property. They have kindly granted members of the Club access provided that we request entry permission at the weigh scale, let them know when we leave, and stay out of the way of equipment. For group entry or other access questions please call the pit office at 838-2124.☐

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# Perils of a Novice Peregrine Watcher

*Dave Smythe*

Monday June 29, about 3 p.m., and I had just settled in to read the *Globe & Mail* after having spent the morning birding with the "Monday Morning Group." The phone rang and it was Bev McBride saying "Pippen\* has fledged two days early and can you help." The first day of scheduled watching was supposed to be Wednesday July 1, but somebody didn't tell Pippen!

By 5 pm, I was standing in a small vacant lot on the northwest corner of Lyon St. along with the rest of the team, Colin Selby, Kathy Krywicki, and Ken Allison, while Bev and Daryl Seip briefed us on the situation. Pippen had left the security of his nest on the east side of the Citadel Inn and was now sitting on a ledge of the Constitution Building on the southwest corner of Lyon and Slater. The situation looked good – the sun was shining, the bird was in full view, and we had a picnic bench to sit on. Within 30 minutes we were drenched to the skin, the result of a sudden thunder storm. Even the "rescue box," a cardboard carrier for small pets, was in bad condition.

Fortunately the storm passed quickly and the return of sunshine helped us to dry out. Pippen also took advantage of this to flex his wings in what I mistook for a drying action. I left the observation post to find Daryl who was discussing business with the Manager of the Citadel. Daryl was running west on Slater toward Lyon with a worried look on his face. Pippen had just flown directly over him to some new but unknown (to us) location. At Lyon St. we found the rest of the team watching the bird clinging precariously to a window ledge on the west side of the Citadel Inn.

The windowsills of the Citadel are steeply sloped and Pippen was hanging on with difficulty and calling for help. Mother arrived quickly and made two swoops within a few feet of him as if to say "let go." On the third pass she appeared to touch him but failed to dislodge him and retired from the scene. After about 15 minutes of this predicament, Pippen slipped off the ledge and flew back to the Constitution Building, this time landing on a ledge between

\* Pippen and Jo-Jo were names chosen for the male and female nestlings in a contest sponsored by the Citadel Inn. Gareth Thomas and Chesley Reinburg were the winners of this contest.

the two towers and about 30 feet below the roof of the building. Daryl said "Its time to go up on the roof."

The roof of the Constitution Building is ideal for observing the birds. This roof is just slightly higher than the nest location on the east side of the Citadel Inn, and offers a commanding view of most of the buildings in the vicinity. With the generous cooperation of the building management, observers had unlimited access to the roof throughout the program. When Daryl and I reached the roof we immediately confirmed that **Pippen** was still in place. As we leaned over the railing, one of the adult peregrines buzzed us twice, coming within twenty feet of us, and then, perhaps realizing that we were not a threat, retired to a communications mast on Place De Ville, Tower A, about two hundred feet away. Daryl seemed satisfied with the situation and left me to man the post.

For the next two hours, **Pippen** stayed put and I was able to enjoy the scenery undisturbed except for one spectacular event. While I was facing west watching the sun set, the adult peregrine, on Tower A, suddenly flashed by on my right almost to the intersection of Albert and Bronson three blocks away, where it took a bedtime snack from a flock of starlings and then returned to the Citadel Inn to enjoy it. I was amazed by the speed and distance involved.

About 9 p.m., the wind started to pick up, at times requiring me to hold onto the railing to maintain my balance. A few minutes later I radioed down to Kathy and Colin on the sidewalk that I was going to join them. I turned and was about half way to the exit when Kathy's voice came on the radio – "**Pippen** is flying." By the time I arrived back at the railing, he had landed on a window of the Citadel, this time on the east side. He had exchanged a very comfortable perch for a precarious one, but the ledges of the Constitution Building are smooth metal with nothing to grab on to, and it is possible that the wind just blew him off. By this time the wind was very strong and I had to leave the roof and it was also getting too dark to see **Pippen** clearly. We realized that **Pippen** would have to leave the window sill at some point but visibility was too poor to track him. Feeling a bit guilty, and concerned about that next flight, we reluctantly called it a night.

Postscript: When I arrived the next morning, the early watch reported that **Pippen** had already visited several rooftops. I felt greatly relieved.▀

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# Peregrine Falcon Nest Watch, 1998

*Bev McBride*

Peregrine Falcons nested again in downtown Ottawa, for the second year in a row. Chances are it was the same two who nested here last year (see *T&L* 32:78-79). Ottawa's Peregrines are one of 18 known nesting pairs in Ontario, and one of six pairs that chose to nest on downtown skyscrapers instead of natural cliffs outside the city.

This year one female and one male hatched. Pippin, the male, was a spunky flier from the beginning. Not once did he require a rescue from the ground. Observers never saw him return to the nest ledge on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor of the Citadel Ottawa Hotel. As far as we know, he's still alive.

The female, Jo-Jo, fledged several days after her brother. Unfortunately she died on her first day of flying. She crashed into the 240 Sparks St. building, the same building that foiled Allison, the only chick to hatch last year.

The OFNC's Birds Committee worked with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) to set up a dawn-to-dusk watch over the young birds. Volunteers took shifts on the ground and on the roof of Constitution Square from June 29th to July 10th. We tracked the movements of the whole family, but stood forever ready in case a fledgling got into trouble and needed to be rescued (see previous article).

Screeching filled the air around the Citadel on June 24th as the parent falcons tried to scare off Bruce Di Labio. He had volunteered to crouch on the nest ledge to distract them while OMNR biologists banded their youngsters. Bruce also took a look at the prey remains on the nest ledge: Spotted Sandpiper, Rock Dove, Black-and-white Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Martin, House Sparrow, cowbird and flicker.

The Peregrines shared stage that morning with the two children who won the contest to name the chicks. The winners and their classmates attended the "banding brunch" where they watched the whole process on large, live-action video monitors.

Judging by the date the eggs hatched, we expected Pippin to fledge first, around July 4th. A keen team of volunteers filled a schedule beginning two



days before that, just to be prudent. Then, young Phippen surprised everyone by taking his first flight late in the morning on June 29th. Maxine and Gordon McLean came to the rescue, inhaled their lunch, and dashed downtown. Many other volunteers took on new shifts at very short notice. The watch was in full swing by supper time.

We dutifully monitored Phippen's progress over the days (he didn't really need us) as he visited more and more rooftops in the area, tearing apart the pigeons and other less discernible items of prey his parents brought to him. As his flight feathers grew in he acquired more of an adult-like silhouette and took off on ever-longer tours around town. By July 7th observers saw him receiving prey in airborne exchanges with his parents, or making stunning, aerial dives out over the Ottawa River.

Meanwhile, hoping to prevent another accident like the one that caused Allison's demise, OMNR biologist Daryl Seip tried to persuade downtown building managers to let him hang streamers on their mirrored buildings to break up the sky's reflection.

Negotiations were just underway when, on July 3, Jo-Jo decided it was time to fly. After an impressive first flight over to the Delta Hotel, she took off down Sparks St. and into the west side of 240 Sparks about five floors down from the top. Volunteer Bruce Wright, a veterinary graduate student, examined her body and confirmed she most likely died quickly on impact.

Saddened, volunteers continued the watch. Daryl went ahead with his streamer-hanging plans in case Phippen became more reckless as he learned to hunt. In a few days the mirrored sides of the 240 Sparks St. building and the Bank of Canada building were festooned with fluttering orange and pink survey tape streamers. Phippen was still seen in the area into the first week of August. Did our efforts help him survive?

After two years we're beginning to learn more about monitoring Peregrine fledglings. Still, among the volunteers we have only a little experience retrieving grounded chicks and in dealing with injured birds. We did learn a lot about coordinating volunteers and having a functional observation post. If we're lucky, we will be able to apply what we've learned next summer when, who knows, there could be three or more fledglings to follow! Some had previous experience in Peregrine Falcon release programs or had done other work with falcons. Several people were on permanent emergency call, including the Wild Bird Care Centre and Dr. Dan Rodgers of the Alta Vista Animal Hospital. Management and staff members of the Citadel and Constitution Square were most cooperative throughout the watch.

Volunteers who filled even one four-hour shift made a highly valued contribution. However, almost half of the volunteers put in 16 hours or more. A very devoted group of folks put in 20 or more hours.

Many thanks to Sandy Garland, OFNC webmaster, who with input from volunteers kept an almost-daily update of the Peregrine watch on the Club's website; and to Dave Smythe and Alan German who prepared information materials for the many curious passers-by.

**Peregrine Watch Volunteers:**  
(those marked \* contributed 20 or more hours)

|                     |                    |                 |                 |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ken Allison         | Paul Gully         | Nancy Lavoie    | Dr. Dan Rodgers |
| Tim Allison         | Jill Hawkins       | Chris Lewis     | Bev Scott *     |
| MaryEllen Arsenault | Lesley Howes       | Bonnie Mabee    | Daryl Seip      |
| Roseanne Bishop     | Katie Iwaniw       | Richard Mabee   | Colin Selby *   |
| Bob Bracken *       | Krista Iwaniw      | Terry Maulsby * | Dave Smythe *   |
| Richard Brouillet   | Ian Jeffrey *      | Bev McBride *   | Verna Smythe    |
| Louise Campagna     | Ron Jones          | Jean McGugan *  | Michael Tate    |
| Brenda Carter       | Tony Keith         | Gordon McLean * | Scott Thompson  |
| Bruce Di Labio      | Greg Kelly *       | Maxine McLean   | Eve Ticknor     |
| Trish Flindall      | Nancy Kelly        | Greg Money      | Rick Ticknor    |
| Anne-Marie Fyfe     | Mary Lou Kingsbury | Stacey Money    | Chris Traynor   |
| Angie Fuller        | Warren Kingsbury   | Gib Moreau      | Nancy Vivian *  |
| Sandy Garland       | Kathy Krywicki     | Kathy Nihei     | Bruce Wright *  |
| Alan German         | Bernie Ladouceur   | Frank Pope      |                 |
| Carol German        | André Lavign       | Iola Price      |                 |

❧

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# Internecine Behaviour

*Jack Holliday*

The sun was not yet high in the sky when the "force" moved out.

From the fortress home, individuals emerged cautiously, and with all sensors alert, proceeded east. There was no highway, and so each chose its own course, keeping in visual contact with others in front, behind and to either side.

Gradually a column formed, the leaders picking their way over the rough terrain and leaving a trail for those following. The column seemed undisciplined with some taking off at tangents, due mostly to the rough and unfamiliar territory, but they soon returned to the general column.

The advance was very slow and cautious, and units reacted belligerently to any threat, real or suspected. As the column lengthened eastward, more and more individuals emerged from the fortress so that however far the column stretched, there was a continuous line from the fortress to the lead.

Individuals were remarkably similar in design and colour, black and red, with identical sensors and armaments, varying only in size. The larger were twice the size of the least, with most being between the extremes, in size.

The sun was high in the sky when the leaders encountered a hostile fortress whose defenders hurried out to repulse the advancing column of "Red-Blacks." The defenders, black in colour, were very similar to the "Red-Blacks" but much smaller, with reduced armour and armaments. Although they defended as best they were capable of, they were soon overwhelmed by the "Red-Blacks" and the ground was quickly littered with destroyed "Blacks," crushed and torn asunder by the superior forces.

All caution had been abandoned when the first "Blacks" had been encountered. Once the defenders were eliminated, the "Red-Blacks" entered the fortress and plundered the food banks and "assembly-lines." Now they loaded up with booty and hurried back along the trail, advising those still advancing, of the prizes ahead.

Soon the column was two-way; one stream hurrying to the defeated fortress and the return stream homeward bound with loot.

Of course you know by now that I am describing a raiding party of red ants. These ants seem incapable of caring for their young and rely on "slaves,"

captured by raiding the homes of the smaller, industrious, black ants. After killing or causing the black ants to flee, the pupae of the black ants are carted off to the mound where the red ants live. There, they presumably emerge from their cocoons and assume that this is their "home." They are then "taught their duties" by older "slave" ants and begin to work at all the tasks required to sustain the colony.

When the older slaves start to die off through old age, then the colony would perish unless a new supply of slaves is obtained. That is why we see (usually in August in our area) columns of "soldiers" travelling, sometimes hundreds of metres, in search of black ant colonies.

Occasionally, columns of red ants from two different colonies intercept each other. When this happens, a "war" ensues between the opposing "armies" and soon a fight to the death is in progress. Over a period of several hours one or the other wins and the ground is littered with dismembered, dead and dying ants.

The victorious ants then pillage the underground galleries of the defeated colony, carrying off the pupae. When these captured pupae emerge as adults, one can assume they become loyal soldiers of what they believe to be their "home" colony.

If you encounter such a raiding column don't run for the "Raid." Squat down and observe this real-life drama. If you witness a "war" between two columns, you will be surprised at just how efficiently they can dismember one another. You may even be shocked at the carnage. Don't be disturbed, this is the way of these ants. Such raids and wars were probably happening before man appeared on earth, and in all probability will continue long after man is extinct.☐



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## **Notice - Bird Counts Planned for the Ottawa-Hull District**

**The 1998 Ottawa-Hull Late Fall Bird Count** is scheduled to begin at 3:00 p.m. Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup> and run until 3:00 p.m. Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup>. The count area will be the Ottawa District (50 km radius from the Peace Tower). This area is divided into four sectors by the Ottawa, Gatineau and Rideau Rivers. There are plenty of excellent birding spots to chose from and all birders of every skill level are welcome. The location of the Sunday evening compilation party will be announced at a later date.

If you are interested in participating in the count, please contact the Hull Co-ordinator Daniel St-Hilaire 776-0860 or the Ottawa coordinator Colin Bowen at 737-2062.

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**The 1998 Ottawa-Hull Christmas Bird Count** will be held on Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup>. Members interested in participating should contact the coordinator, Daniel St-Hilaire at 766-0860. He will provide information on action time, sectors where counts will be made and the sector leaders. **Feeder watchers** in the Ottawa area should call in information to Bev Scott (599-9330).

At 4:00 p.m., after the count, there will be a meeting of all interested people involved to have a meal, review the events of the day, and to compile an official summary of numbers and species of birds. Participants will be informed by the section leaders of the location for this get-together.

**The Dunrobin Christmas Bird Count** is scheduled for Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999. Prospective participants and feeder watchers in the Dunrobin area should contact Bruce Di Labio at 599-8733.

The figures from the final Ottawa and Dunrobin Counts will be presented as official reports to the National Audubon Society. As previously, participants will be asked to pay a fee of \$5.00.

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## Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,  
call the Club number (722-3050) after 10 a.m.

*Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.*

**ALL OUTINGS:** *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and the activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

**REGISTERED BUS TRIPS:** *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to E.M. Dickson, 2037 Honeywell Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 0P7, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. We also wish to discourage the actual payment of bus fees on the day of the event.*

**EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE:** *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Club members must be prepared to show their membership cards to gain access for Club functions after regular museum hours.*

**BIRD STATUS LINE:** *Phone 860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings call Michael Tate at 825-1231. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

*Le Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais has a similar service, in French, run by Daniel St-Hilaire at 778-3413 and the Bird Status Line is 778-0737.*

Sunday  
4 October  
9:00 a.m.  
to  
4:00 p.m.

### **BUS EXCURSION: AUTUMN COLOURS AT LAC-LA-BLANCHE**

**Leaders:** Eileen Evans and Pearl Peterkin  
**Meet:** Supreme Court, front entrance, Wellington Street at  
Kent Street  
**Cost:** \$10.00 (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY)  
... see previous issue for details.





**Tuesday**  
**13 October**  
**8:00 p.m.**

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**  
**EFFECTS OF THE 1998 ICE STORM**  
**ON LOCAL WILDLIFE POPULATIONS**

**Speaker:** Fred Schueler

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

After the devastating ice storm in January, the OMNR asked Fred Schueler, now the Curator of the recently formed Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum, and Dave and Carolyn Seburn to describe the ice left in the snowpack, and to assess its impact on mammals and ground-dwelling birds. 180 snow profiles were recorded at 90 sites throughout the area damaged by the ice. Various features of the ice could be measured quite adequately but assessing the effects on wildlife proved to be a quagmire of hints, anecdotes and much speculation. Some of the most striking results were obtained from various vole populations. This presentation will serve to highlight some of the less publicized events associated with last winter's disaster.

**Saturday**  
**17 October**  
**7:30 a.m.**

**FALL BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER**

**Leader:** Bob Bracken

**Meet:** Britannia Drive-In Theatre, 3090 Carling Avenue. Participants will visit several locales along the Ottawa River on a half-day outing to observe waterfowl and other migrating species. Bring a snack and a warm drink.

**Sunday**  
**1 November**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**NOVEMBER MIGRANTS**

**Leader:** Jim Harris

**Meet:** Westgate Shopping Centre, southeast corner of the parking lot, Carling Avenue.

Participants will be led on a quest for late fall raptors, passerines and some intriguing early winter arrivals that signal the cold, harsh days ahead. This is a half-day outing.

**Friday**  
**6 November**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**GULL IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP – PART II**

**Speaker:** Bruce Di Labio

**Meet:** Salon, third floor, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

...see page 156 of the previous issue for further details.

**Saturday**  
**7 November**  
**9:00 a.m.**

### **LATE FALL RAMBLE IN GATINEAU PARK**

**Leader:** Philip Martin

**Meet:** Supreme Court Building, front entrance, Wellington at Kent Street.

This general interest outing will focus on the identification of various nuts, fruits, seeds, fungi and other interesting forms of plant life. The occasional bird or mammal may be encountered along the trails. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.

**Tuesday**  
**10 November**  
**8:00 p.m.**

### **OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**

#### **NORTHERN EXPOSURES:**

#### **NATURE IN THE HIGH ARCTIC**

**Speaker:** Mary Kunzler-Larmann

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

Mary Kunzler-Larmann has made many trips to Ellesmere Island, Baffin Island, the Barrenlands, the Torngats of northern Labrador, the western cordillera, Greenland, Iceland and Chilean Patagonia. Her wilderness experiences included canoeing, kayaking, hiking and backpacking. She is a skilled licensed guide in the Adirondacks, N.Y. and in Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve. An accomplished professional photographer, she has photographed musk-oxen, caribou, wolves, walrus and seals at close range as well as arctic birds and wildflowers. Mary's presentation will focus on the extensive natural beauty and scenery of the High Arctic with the aim of encouraging adventuresome naturalists to explore these fabulous regions of the North.

**Saturday**  
**5 December**  
**8:00 a.m.**

### **LATE FALL AND EARLY WINTER BIRDS**

**Leader:** Tony Beck

**Meet:** Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Participants will join Tony in search of lingering fall migrants and various species of birds that choose to inhabit the Ottawa District during Nature's harshest season. This is a half-day outing.

Tuesday  
8 December  
8:00 p.m.

#### OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

##### PORTRAITS OF NATURE

Speaker: Isabelle Nicol

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

Isabelle Nicol provides presentations to schools, seniors' groups and horticultural societies on the fascinating wonders of the world of nature that surrounds us. Her love of nature is expressed eloquently through her photography as she seeks to uncover and describe intriguing aspects of the natural history of her subjects. Her mission is to assist people of various ages and interests in becoming better acquainted with the magical and colourful realm of nature. Join Isabelle for an entertaining and informative evening through her viewfinder.

Tuesday  
12 January  
7:30 p.m.

#### OFNC 120<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

The 1999 Council will be elected at this meeting and a full disclosure of the Club's financial position will be given.

Thursday  
May 13  
to  
Sunday  
May 16

#### SPRING EXCURSION TO POINT PELEE

The Club is planning another four-day bus excursion to coincide with the peak of spring migration in this world-renowned birding locale. The trip is tentatively scheduled for Thursday May 13 to Sunday May 16, 1999, inclusive. The excursion will proceed on the basis of sufficient early response from the membership. Those interested should contact the Club number (722-3050 after 10:00 a.m.) as soon as possible. Full details of the itinerary and the cost will appear in the January – March 1999 issue of *T & L*.<sup>□</sup>



#### ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations recently? Is there a colony of rare plants or a nesting site that needs protection? Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*. If you have access to an IBM or IBM-compatible computer using 5.25 or 3.5 inch diskettes, all the better. If you don't, we will happily receive submissions in any form – typed, written, printed or painted!

#### URL of our site:

<http://www.achilles.net/ofnc/index.htm>

#### WEBMASTER's e-mail

[ofnc@achilles.net](mailto:ofnc@achilles.net)



**DEADLINE:** Material intended for the January-March 1999 issue must be in the editor's hands by November 15, 1998. Mail your manuscripts to:

Fenja Brodo, Editor, *Trail & Landscape*, 28 Benson Street, Nepean, Ontario, K2E 5J5

H: (613) 723-2054; Fax: (613) 364-4027.

e-mail [fbrodo@cyberus.ca](mailto:fbrodo@cyberus.ca)

ISSN 0041-0748

**TRAIL & LANDSCAPE**

published by

**THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB**

Second Class Mail - Registration Number 2777

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and Undeliverable Copies:

Box 35069, Westgate P.O.,

Ottawa, Ont. K1Z 1A2

Return postage guaranteed

Printed by  
LOMOR PRINTERS LTD.